

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:06 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger, Chatterjee, and Raser present. Absent: Bloomfield, Kirk, Kreider and Wallace.

MINUTES

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of May 22, 2006 meeting (motion by Sullebarger, second by Chatterjee).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 518, 520 AND 526 READING ROAD, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on 518, 520 and 526 Reading Road. She stated this proposal was previously presented to the Board as a preliminary design review on April 10, 2006 and May 8, 2006. The applicant has made some revisions based on the Board's comments and requested a Certificate of Appropriateness for the residential conversion of two buildings.

The Board members were given a handout of e-mail correspondence from Board member Jeffrey Raser that was forwarded to the applicant on May 23, 2006. The e-mail contained design comments and suggestions. Ms. Cowden stated the applicant chose not to make any additional modifications since May 22, 2006. She said that although the current design was a notable improvement from the first review, staff felt a number of items still did not meet the conservation guidelines. Ms. Cowden gave a brief overview of each of these items.

In response to Mr. Raser, Ms. Cowden stated that the wood cornice and columnettes on 518 Reading Road are of a simple design. The guidelines clearly state that original ornamental elements should be preserved or if the elements are severely deteriorated they should be repaired or replaced to match the original. She stated that staff felt the use of smoothly textured stucco on the east elevation was acceptable since it was a secondary elevation.

Terry Daspit, architect, stated he would be able to follow all staff recommendations for 518 Reading Road. In response to Mr. Raser's question, he said his comments would focus on the 520 Reading Road portion of the project.

Mr. Daspit presented the same design that was shown to the Board on May 8, 2006. He said the intent of the design was to open up the building as much as possible because of the depth of the building. He stated the design of the upper portion lacks sensitivity and relationship to the lower portion of the building. Mr. Daspit acknowledged the Board recommended retention of the two small second story windows. However, he felt the windows were not strong design elements and sought to create larger openings that allowed more light in the condominium units.

In response to Mr. Chatterjee, Mr. Daspit stated the central window bay would be clear glass. He said there would be an exterior cap on the vertical window mullions and a sealant joint on the horizontals.

Mr. Senhauser stated that as he mentioned in past meetings, he felt the building was more Secessionist than Art Deco. For this reason, the two small windows in the limestone portion of the building were the most important features and should be retained.

Ms. Sullebarger stated the different window configurations as built on the upper and lower floors were acceptable to her. She said the job of the Board was to preserve the historic character of the

building as it is, not as we wish it were. She remarked that the existing windows were larger than those in a typical Over-the-Rhine rowhouse and stated her desire to see more of the original openings retained. In response, Mr. Grier stated the building was pre-cast concrete and adding a light well or courtyard to increase the natural light in the interior would not be financially feasible.

Ms. Sullebarger suggested a compromise amendment to the staff's recommendation. The amendment identified the lower portion of 520 Reading Road as the original and more architecturally significant portion of the structure. It required the retention of original window openings on the second floor and permitted changes as proposed to the fenestration in the upper three floors. Finally, the proposed amendment prohibited the painting of any masonry, required a smooth stucco finish on the east elevation, required the roof deck railing to be installed so that it was not visible from the street, and required the submittal of final drawings to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction. Mr. Chatterjee seconded this motion.

In response to Ms. Sullebarger's motion and questions from Mr. Senhauser, the developer, Joe Bley stated the proposal was unacceptable due to projected salability of the center condominium unit. The motion was defeated and reverted to the original staff recommendation.

Ms. Sullebarger suggested a site visit to 520 Reading Road to give Board members the opportunity to assess in person the building's interior and exterior conditions. The Board concurred that a site visit would be scheduled.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Chatterjee) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the residential conversion of 518 Reading Road for a period of two years with the following conditions:
 - a. The exterior brick walls shall not be painted.
 - b. The existing two-over-two wood sash shall be retained or replaced with new sash to match the original in material, size and style as closely as possible per the guidelines.
 - c. The original wood decorative columnettes and framework shall be retained, repaired as necessary and repainted.
 - d. The original wood cornice shall not be wrapped in metal as proposed. The cornice shall be repaired as necessary and repainted.
 - e. Final construction drawings and material/product selections shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.
2. Table consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the residential conversion of 520 Reading Road pending a site view of the building by the Historic Conservation Board.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS 1203 SYCAMORE STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Urban Conservator William Forwood presented a report for the installation of four two-sided banners on existing poles near 12th and Sycamore and the installation of a roof sign on the former Sycamore Diner at 1203 Sycamore Street. He stated that the building is a non-contributing resource within the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Furthermore, the Sycamore Diner sign was not original, having been installed when the diner was moved to Over-the-Rhine and rehabbed in the 1990s. The Department of Buildings & Inspections considers the proposed banners and sign to be a "refacing" of existing signs, so no permit was required. As proposed no zoning variances were needed.

Michael Spalding and Roula David, business owners, stated that the signs reflected the interior design, name, menu and theme of the new establishment, the "Vinyl Diner." The typeface and colors of the new sign were selected to be compatible with the mid-twentieth century diner.

In response to Ms. Sullebarger's question, Mr. Forwood stated the sign would be internally illuminated channel neon. In the past, the Board has approved similar signs on a case-by-case basis.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Sullebarger) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of the new roof and banner signs.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____